



Communications Workers of America
Chris Shelton | *President*

Government Affairs Department
Dan Mauer | *Director*

November 5, 2019

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the officers and 700,000 members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), I am writing to express our continued strong opposition to consideration of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) until its substance is fixed to address the needs of working families.

As you know, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was a complete failure for working families in the United States, Mexico and Canada. The agreement resulted in major increases in our trade deficit, massive job losses, and downward pressure on wages, while simultaneously failing to deliver for our brothers and sisters in our neighboring countries. In particular, Mexico has seen an increase in poverty, huge waves of forced migration and real wage stagnation.

These problems all occurred in substantial part because of NAFTA's failure to protect worker rights. NAFTA's side letters on labor rights and environmental protection have proven themselves to be totally ineffectual. More recent agreements that have included theoretically "enforceable" labor and environmental standards have done little better--the U.S. has never won a single case in either of those areas under any of our trade agreements.

Unfortunately, the USMCA signed last year would not get the job done to correct those past mistakes. Instead, it included unprecedented monopoly protections for the pharmaceutical industry to keep life-saving generic drugs off the market.

CWA was very pleased by Speaker Pelosi's establishment of a working group to deal with the substantial flaws in the USMCA deal that President Trump signed last year. Furthermore, it has been encouraging to see that working group work in good faith with the administration to address core issues of importance to working families, including labor rights, environmental protections, access to medicines, rules of origin, and enforcement. It is our understanding that those negotiations continue to proceed in a productive direction.

However, it is crucial that policymakers keep in mind that the provisions included in this deal are not simply words on paper, but have major impacts on the lives of millions of working families. For that reason, progress on paper will not be adequate unless it delivers meaningful outcomes on the ground. To ensure that worker rights are protected, the flaws that have slowed and blocked enforcement in the past must all be effectively addressed--including inadequacies and loopholes in the underlying standards, hurdles in accessing the worksites in violation, prolonged timelines before action is taken, weak remedies, and the inability of worker advocates to ensure that violations are addressed seriously.

Similar action must, of course, happen to ensure that environmental standards and rules of origin in the agreement are effectively enforced. Meanwhile, any final agreement simply cannot include any provisions that would lock in high drug prices. Moreover, Congress must work with the administration to address the continued lack of resources in Mexico to overhaul its labor laws and the fact that anti-union forces continue to commit violence against worker activists with impunity.

CWA members, like millions of workers across the country, have suffered immense harm from NAFTA and continue feeling its negative impacts on a regular basis. As such, ensuring that a revised USMCA deal fixes NAFTA's flaws is critically important. For that reason, I strongly urge you to oppose consideration of the USMCA until the House working group and the administration are able to reach a deal that actually benefits working families.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel J. Mauer".

Dan Mauer
Director of Government Affairs
Communications Workers of America (CWA)